MANN CO. MONTHLY

ISSUE 1

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LMAObox and its Fallout

After a long time of wreaking havoc on pubs, the LMAObox is capable of being detected by the Valve Anti-Cheat (VAC) system. This alone is already huge and has enough depth for it's own article but with this update to VAC a much bigger situation came up.

After the update was shipped, a frighteningly large amount of Competitive players were dropped from their teams. This implies two things: A) we had up to platinum ranked players which are using an aimbot to gain an unfair advantage and B) there is a good chance that their team mates were aware of them cheating and letting it slide.

This is bad. Not really something that I need to specify but it's nonetheless a topic that requires more attention, especially now with the impending Matchmaking release. It may be the end of LMAObox but it's not the end of aimbots. Someone else will make a new one and it will probably spread like wildfire and I hope that Valve keeps an eye out for that. So what happens when the next LMAObox comes out, how will it affect the Matchmaking? If LMAObox 2.0 comes about, what is there to prove that Valve won't take another four years to finally ban it? It's now public knowledge that there were a fair amount of competitive players utilizing LMAObox so it's less of problem for the average player to just go into Matchmaking equipped the new aimbot. Competitive players cheated so why shouldn't you?

This paints a grim picture where a appearance of a new hack couldn't just highly impact Matchmaking but the game as a whole. What if one high ranking player cheats and gets found out? Well that's a scandal and I'll admit as a writer I would love it. But hundreds of competitive players cheating in various ranks, that's a crisis and we, the community, should prepare for the next wave of bots. •

TripI3M

Some notable Platinum, Gold, and Silver Division Comp Players in Highlander, 6v6 and 4v4 that have been dropped from their rosters on April 29th. Includes players from NA, Euro, and AUS/NZ

Highlander:
crii LF HI Scrims
Aftterlife
iFY
allie
cynex
MauiiHan
fade
ScarletuRemiliaUu
ngcskimmie
traps
cray
Kristo
BlackWhite
StFrancis
Skittles
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Slamm
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psych LFT
fade
forever
4v4:
vlad
Kristo
AR AR SHAWNofEPICNESS
EVL mr64bit

An Introduction to Highlander

Do you love playing TF2? Are you looking to step up your game? Look no further, as Highlander is the place for you! Highlander is a competitive Team Fortress 2 game mode, where there is one of each class. Highlander has 9 players on each team, each player playing one of the 9 classes. As a more fun alternative to other ways to improve your game, Highlander traditionally plays a variety of maps, including payload and king of the hill maps, along with different maps like cp_steel and control point maps. Highlander is very easy to get into, and once you begin your journey into Highlander, I'm sure you won't regret it!

Player Roles

Highlander is a very diverse game mode, as each of the 9 classes specialize in many things, but in general you can fit them into 3 categories: the pick classes, the damage classes, and the support classes. Each class in Highlander has their own amazing capabilities, and you need each of the classes working together in tandem to be an effective unit.

Pick Classes

The pick classes generally consist of the Spy, Sniper, Scout, and Soldier, and these classes primarily go for picks, or killing high value classes on the other team. They stay on the outskirts of the battle, and specialize in making plays to start a push, or to clean up and give the team an advantage after them. They normally function with minimal heals from the medic, and look to get picks on major classes. The pick classes generally target the enemy Medic, Sniper, and Demoman. Picking the medic is a premium, as killing a medic with an Übercharge can change the outcome of a game. The Demoman and the Sniper are also good targets, as an adept Demoman can just pump out damage onto your entire team during pushes, and the Sniper is important as if he headshots one of your teammates before a push, you have to fall back and forfeit ground for free. Pick classes are very important and can change the outcome of the game in just one play, are fun to play, and are an integral part of your team.

Damage Classes

The damage classes are classes that excel at dishing out damage, and they are normally the Demoman, Heavy, Scout, and Soldier. These classes bathe in the middle of big fights, and love to deal damage to force back and create space to take ground and capture the objective. These classes notably the Scout and the Demoman, soak up Übercharges to deal out group damage, and chase kills on high value targets when invulnerable. The Soldier and Heavy are also the main tanks on the team, and are responsible to absorb damage and tank for the team. These classes are the meat of your team, as they do the most damage and are the main pushing force of your team. These classes do most of the dirty work for the team, and are an absolute blast to play.

Support Classes

The support classes function behind the team, and are the spine of team, and are necessary to have to be a successful team. This group is the Medic, Engineer, and Pyro, and use their expertise to keep the whole team floating. These guys are the unsung heroes of Highlander and have many useful abilities to create space and keep the team alive. The

Medic is the most important part of your team, with the entire game revolving around his Übercharge level. He doesn't have many tools to defend himself, and so it's the entire team's responsibility to keep him alive, and in return he keeps the team alive and overhealed. This is no easy task though, as all the pick classes and more will take advantage of every opportunity they have to kill the medic. The medic's real power lies in his Übercharge. With his mediguns having the capacity to give players guaranteed critical hits, or make the target invulnerable for 8 seconds at a time, which is ample time to get picks and gain control of the game. Engineer is also a very powerful class, for his ability to deny area and to teleport people across the map. His sentry is designed to deny area and make a safe zone for your team. The engineer's other buildings though have big roles also. His teleporter is essential and good to have on all maps, and the resources gained from having a dispenser is too powerful to turn down on most maps.

General Highlander Strategies

Highlander is an ever-changing game, but even then, there is still a meta that when mastered will give you a gaming edge. By far and large, one of the most important things to know is that a Highlander team is by nature split into 2 basic groups. One of these groups is the combo, and this group consists of the more tanky, damaging classes, with the aid of the medic and pyro to keep them safe. The other important group in Highlander is the flank, and you guessed it, they play on the flank. The flank classes are notably the pick classes, and these guys love to rely with minimal help from the medic, and it's their job to call out enemy positions, and hold down other routes into the battle. The classes in these groups are subject to change depending on maps and your team, but the combo and flank is the groundwork of a good Highlander team. The other most important part of the current Highlander meta is the Medic. At this stage in the game, almost everything revolves around the medic. The medic is the glue for the entire team, and without him, a team (quite literally) can't survive. Heals are a very valuable tool in competitive games, and his beam is one of the only ways to reliably get health, and has other important uses also. The other use of the medic's medigun is the Übercharge. It's one of the most important in-game aspects of TF2 and it's charge almost directly correlates to your team's current power. At full charge just one right-click from this gun, can make a teammate invincible, give him crits, or even superheal multiple players. These charges are used to gain an edge on the enemy team, and when your team has a charge, you are a force to be reckoned with. The other thing about Übercharges though, are that when you have it or near it, the medic, which doesn't have much defensive power, becomes the most-valued pick in the game, because he loses whatever Übercharge percentage he has after he dies. Keeping the medic alive and playing around his charges is one of the most important assets of being a strong team in Highlander.

Where Do I Start?

Ranked matchmaking will soon come out for Team Fortress 2, but there are other ways to enter the realm of Highlander. Some of the easiest ways to get a taste of the Highlander experience are to join Highlander PUG groups, or look on websites like TF2Center or TF2Stadium. If you want to take a dive straight into the action try

http://www.ugcleague.com

or

http://etf2l.org

to get started! The opportunities are endless within Highlander, and I hope you enjoy your experience playing it! •

Dirt'

The Armory

Natascha

"Back in Black"

So, the Natascha. It's been useless for a long time, so you might be wondering if it still is. Well I've got to say not anymore (electric guitar solo)! For those of you who don't pay attention to changelogs, the Natascha was buffed back in Gun Mettle to a usable state. The slowing effect (which falls off over distance) is actually functional now, allowing you to stop enemies from getting away. It also comes with a solid 20% damage resistance when spun up. It does, however, do 30% less damage. It works pretty well when you pair it with the Sandvich and Gloves of Running Urgently, especially on maps where ammo is plentiful. Ammo use is a common problem for Heavies, but the damage reduction makes this one worse than most. Make sure you know where your packs are, or you'll wind up stranded and useless (and probably dead).

The Panic Attack

"Hold your fire!"

Continuing on a theme, the Panic Attack is another weapon that actually works now. As of Tough Break you can now hold your shots instead of auto-firing them. It's an interesting weapon, as it switches the role of a shotgun to something significantly different. Instead of cleaning up kills, you can use it as a corner-bait weapon. Say you're an Engineer whose nest has just been spammed out. There's a damaged soldier jumping in to finish you off. The Panic Attack lets you hide around a corner, load up your shots, and take down a heavier class (in some cases). However, like the Natascha or the Beggar's Bazooka, you'll waste a significant amount of ammo. Not as much of a problem when playing Engineer, but more so as a Heavy. So essentially, it doesn't work for everyone, nor every class. I would suggest trying it out yourself. Who knows? You might like it.

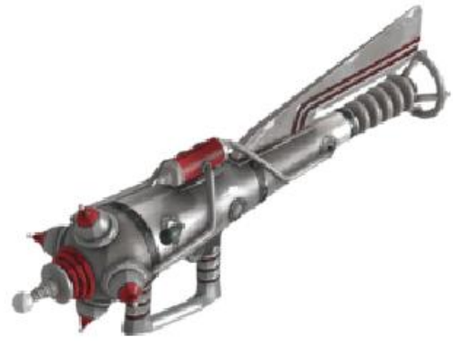
The Phlogistinator

"W+M1: The Weapon"

The Phlog was changed twice recently. The first change added full über while activating mmph, and removed the 10% damage penalty it originally carried. I disagreed with these changes because the weapon became as strong as the other flamethrowers without much effort. It rewarded players for running mindlessly into groups of enemies, giving the pyro full health and crits after killing one or two enemies. This resulted in a flood of Phlog-wielding, gibus-wearing players to valve servers everywhere, and they did well. The other change I mentioned came as a result of the mountains of salt on the subreddit and elsewhere, and removed the full heal as well as upping the damage to get mmph. The new changes seem to be quite balanced overall, and there has been a huge reduction in the salt quantities in pubs. It's like 2010 all over again!

"Get this Engie trash outta here."

Odd. An older weapon. I wouldn't have thought I'd be talking about old weapons this quickly, but it's one of many that are critically underused. It gives the soldier's rocket launcher a much more support-oriented purpose rather than a straight-up powerhouse/mobility tool. Few Soldier primaries do support like this one. The ability to temporarily disable an entire nest is a fantastic thing when your team is there to back you up. On the flip side, it really fails to stand up as a solo building-destroyer, as it does only 20% of it's damage against buildings. It also sets people on fire with the charged shot, allowing you to cause panic in some situations. The extra damage provided by the mini-crit helps that too. Essentially, it's a good support weapon, but loses out against stock in a pure offensive comparison. A Demo buddy could be extremely effective alongside a Solly running the Mangler, theoretically. Try it with the stock Shotgun.



The Cow Mangler 5000

"Ah yes, the backstab gun."

Hah. Immature jokes. It's funny. Now that that's out of the way, I actually like this gun a good bit. While the decreased clip size is difficult to get used to if you're switching from the stock, it's not uncommon among Scout primaries. The extra damage provided, while situational, is helpful against higher-health classes. The main reason this weapon works as well as it does is that nobody really expects a scout to try and get behind them. The stock Scattergun, which is the most common choice, doesn't gain much of an extra advantage behind players. It really has the most uses on maps with lots of flank routes, such as Snowycoast. Many of these are accessible through the Winger, so I'd recommend using them together. This weapon also encourages a different playstyle than normal by rewarding you more for flanking. The Back Scatter also sounds much more solid than other Scatterguns. It has a few related achievements, too.

The Back Scatter

"Gotta heal fast."

The Quick-Fix, a staple for pub Medics anywhere. Its faster heal rate and quicker time-to-Übercharge helps the Medic detach him/herself from the patient if need be. It also allows for a lot more mobility, by mirroring your heal target's speed. This means if you heal a Scout, you'll go fast. If you heal a charging Demo, you'll go fast. It also, more importantly, lets you follow your target's explosive jumps. This means that you could get to the front lines much faster, if you wanted to. However, be aware that while the Übercharge increases healing rate even further, it doesn't provide complete invulnerability like the stock. This means you and your patient are still vulnerable to Spies and Snipers while using it, and enough enemies will still take you down. It's best used with a pocket Soldier/Demo/Scout who you can communicate with easily. Overall, it lets you focus on your whole team more than one person, something that's invaluable in a setting with large teams.

The Quick-Fix

• skibbinz

Interview with Bobsplosion

I had the privilege of talking to Bobsplosion, the richest player in the Team Fortress 2 economy, and would like to share the interview with you.

-Psychotwilight

Psychotwilight: First off, you are the richest player in TF2 and own some of the nicest items in the game. What was it like to trade for these legendary items?

Bobsplosion: Regular trading is much stricter, where people get upset about one scrap here or there. High-tier trading is played much more loosey-goosey. A couple dozen keys here or there don't matter.

Psychotwilight: You're often present in high tier unusual trading. How is unusual trading different than regular trading? Do you have any pointers for people just entering into the unusual scene?

Bobsplosion: Getting into the unusual game isn't easy. I'd recommend making an investment and buying your first few keys with cash and try to work your way up from there. "Scrap to unusual" is a massive waste of time, especially since scrapbanking only works on the completely clueless with the advent of sites like scrap.tf.

Psychotwilight: What do you think of the recent changes in the economy, such as key appreciation, escrow, and Tough Break?

Bobsplosion: Escrow is a massive pain in the ass and goes against the "all trades are final" policy that's been around for years. Unfortunately it's unlikely Valve will do a 180 so we're probably stuck with it. Everything else is fine.

Psychotwilight: There is a conspiracy/running gag that the super rich traders and admins are manipulating the price of keys/ref, etc. What do you say to that?

Bobsplosion: Ridiculous. People buy and sell at prices they want to. The only thing that can stop them is competition. Backpack.tf reflects the market, not the other way around.

Psychotwilight: You sure do have a lot of unusuals. Which ones are your favorites, and how do you decide which ones to wear?

Bobsplosion: Aside from the obvious, I'm pretty partial to my Strange Unusual Factory New Weapons that I have a small collection of. My Brickhouse Minigun has Hot, which I'm particularly proud of. I usually just have a small handful of unusuals that are dedicated to a specific cosmetic set, so it's not really a "decide what to wear" situation.

Psychotwilight: You own some of the nicest items in the game... but what is your dream item?

Bobsplosion: My dream items are mostly lost are locked away Craft #1 items. Some have been crafted, some are stuck in dead accounts, others are owned by people who refuse to trade them. Those are the ones I want the most.

Psychotwilight: Finally, what advice would you give to traders trying to climb the ladder?

Bobsplosion: Invest money for pure. Pure and cash give you leverage, great way to set yourself off. Use all the resources available. Consult in others. •

Maps For Everymann

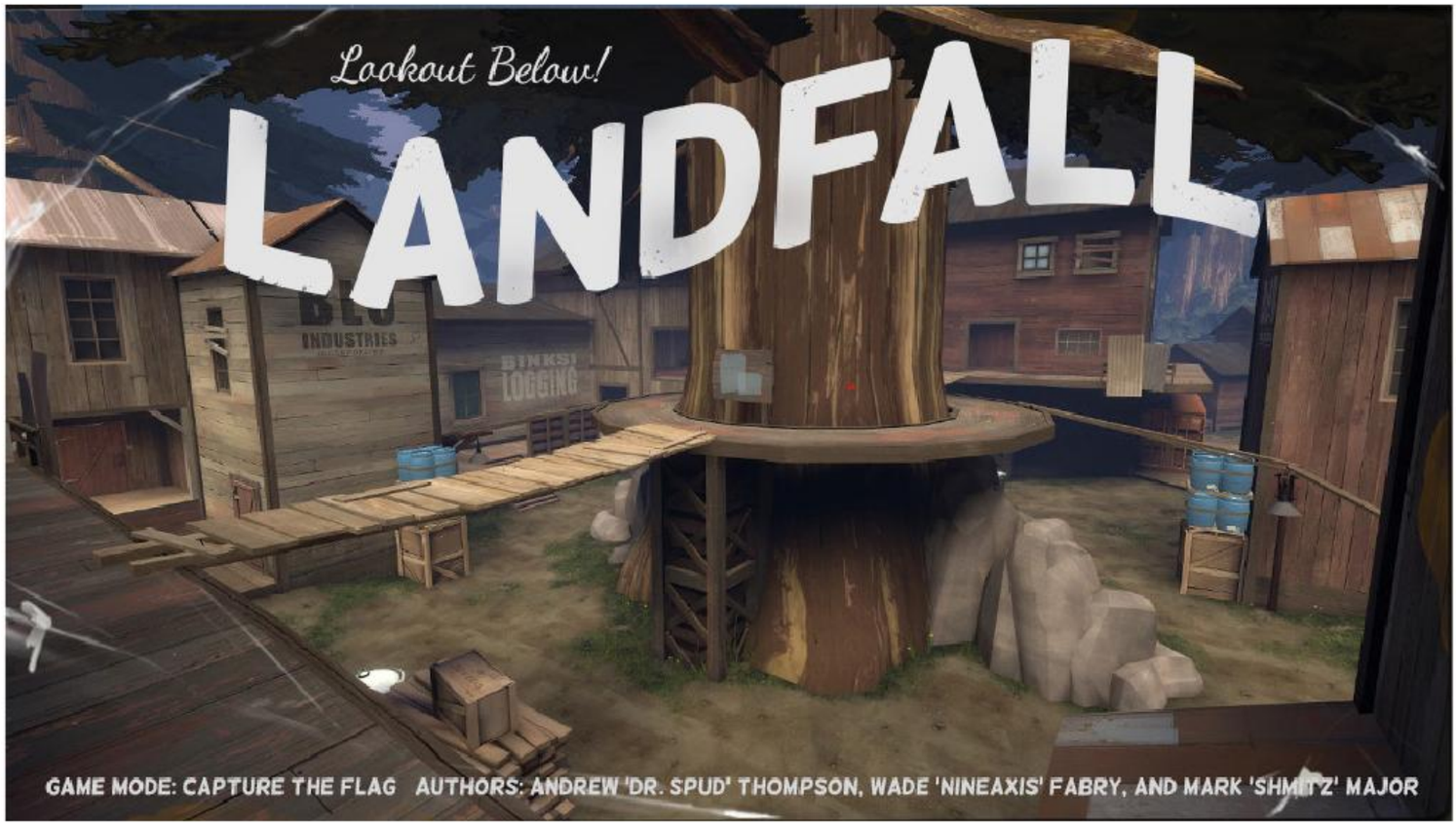
Maps are the bread and butter of any match. The battleground is a crucial component that adds an entire layer of strategy to the game. 17 new maps have been added as of late, one of the most bountiful years to date.

Of those seventeen, a few outshine the other in terms of quality, playability, and just pure visual beauty- and of that handful, one stands out even farther. Landfall is the map that lovers of Capture the Flag have been waiting for- it revitalizes the game and allows everybody to shine.

A simple layout allows for many nooks and crannies

As per usual, defense classes, namely Demoman and Engineer, can be very powerful on the map, with there being great defensibility around the intelligence- however, a crucial difference separates Landfall above the rest: the intelligence is no longer buried beneath a team's base, but it resides directly outside of spawn. Gone are the days of defense consisting of either turtling or panicking the second the intelligence is stolen. Instead, as soon as a player spawns, they can get strong defense going, changing the flow of the game in a way similar to Control Point or Payload maps. •

Shady the First



Team Fabulous: A Fashion Guide

From California to the New York Island, this land is your land, and you're gonna deny anyone any access to your land. The problem – defending your land can be a very messy affair, and cleaning enemy blood off of your Sentry gun every time can be very exhausting, and you're a very hard-working man already! So how can you show people that you mean business, that they better not cross even your line of sight and better take a different route? How about by sporting a proud beard? The "Scotch Saver" does exactly that, it speaks for itself and tells people "Look, boy, you're not worth my time, I'll rather spend it grooming my beard.", and after you shot their face off, you relax with a nice swig of Scotch. You're a cowboy, after all, you do things your way, which the "Western Wear" demonstrates perfectly. Lone? Yes, that's what the Sentry is for. Lonely? Not at all, that's also what your gun is for. And the bullets on the brim of your hat show any intruder that they best keep a distance. The "Antarctic Researcher" keeps you warm during the colder hours of the job, with insulated pockets that can be filled with important gears and screws, or just a flask of whiskey. (keep at least one eye out for demo) You deserve it, after all. This "Tinkering Techie" outfit tells people "I'm busy, leave me alone." And you like it just that way.

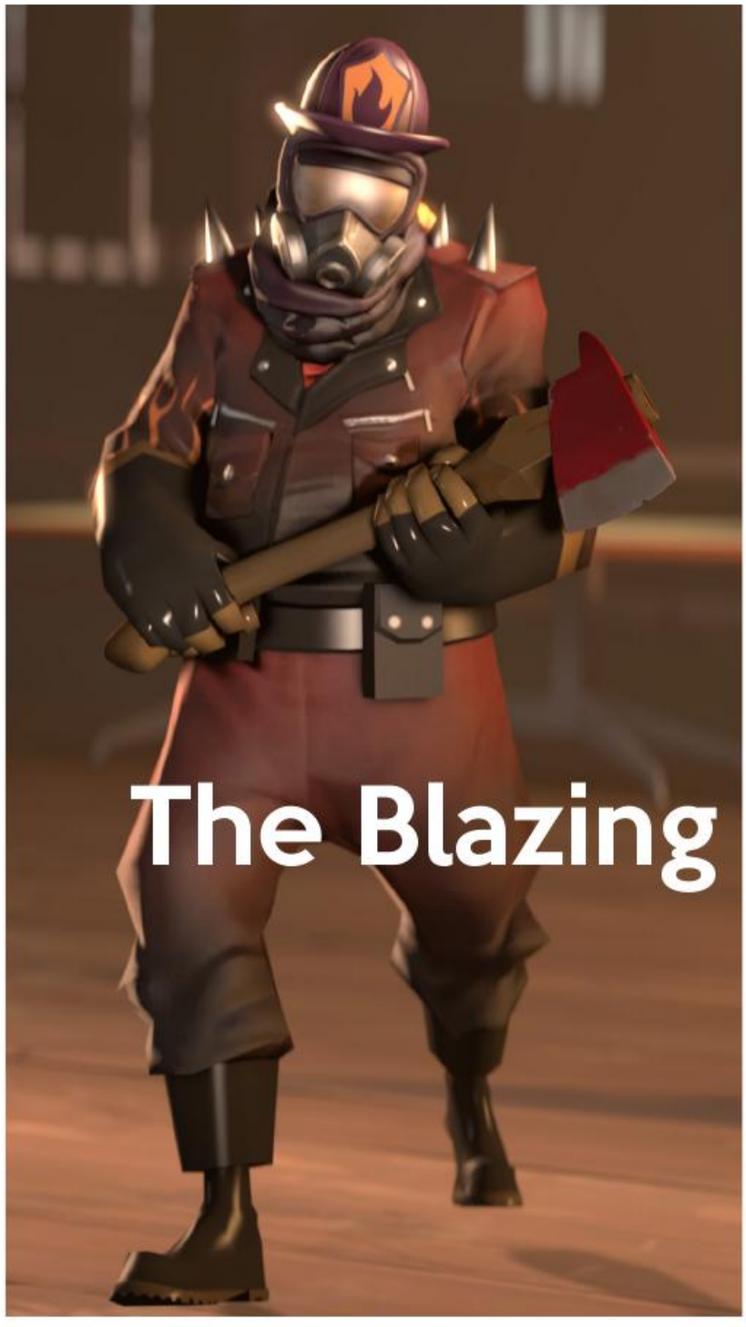
The Well-Read Mann

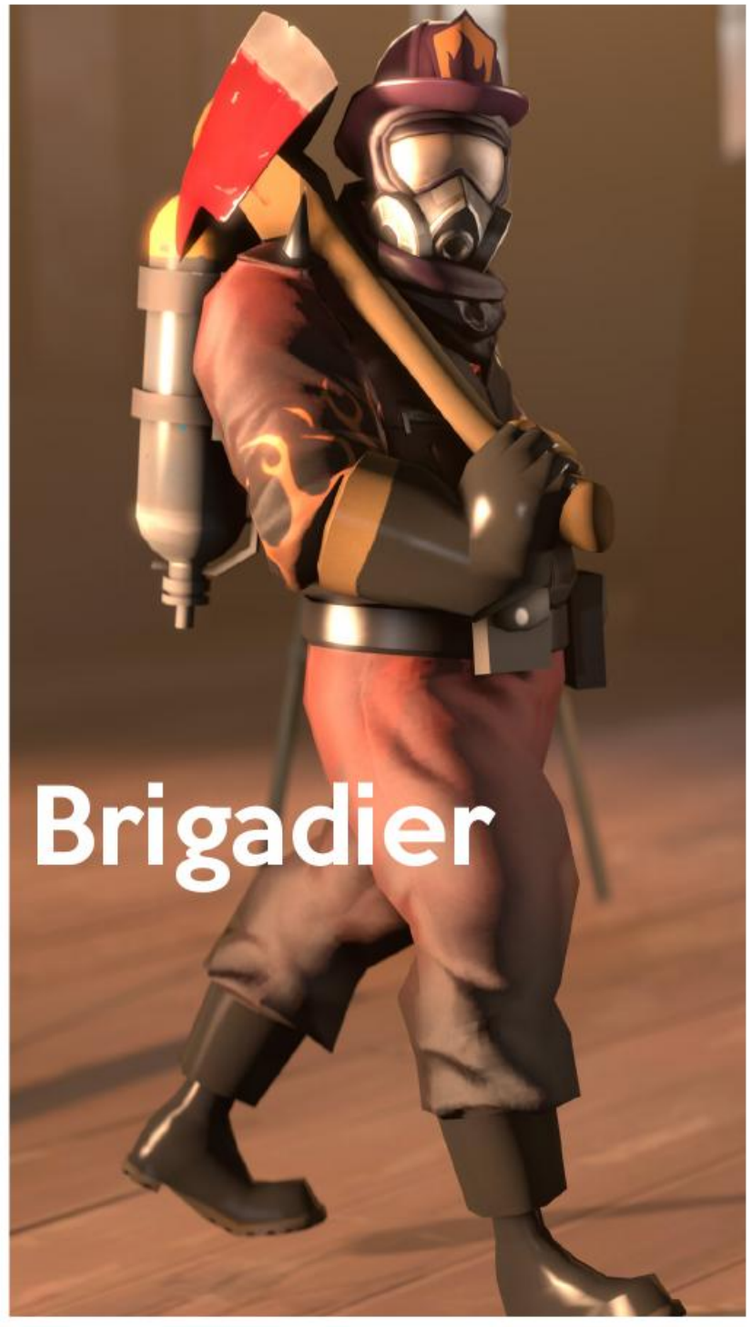
You're a Heavy. You work hard, you fight hard, you read smart. You're a calculating, unstoppable and dangerous machine of a man. But does the enemy see that? How could you make the enemy fear your mind and body the second they lay their eyes upon you, right before making them regret ever waking up in the morning to do so? Why not use clothes to intimidate? Our solution - "The Well Read Mann". The wild, even animalistic look of the "Tyurtleneck" will make the enemy realize what kind of person they're dealing with. 'Why are your sleeves ripped?' they might think! 'Why did the same happen to your body?' your fists might respond. But killing is not your only passion, and a swift look at the "Tomb Readers" will surely show everyone that for you, reading is just as important as maiming. And of course you can look suave doing it, with the "Soviet Gentleman". Don't let the name turn you off, on the contrary, it is to confuse your enemy, and make them realize that you are, in fact, not a gentle man. Now go and do what you can do best - destroy everything in your path, you big train of a man.

The Doctective

It's a cold, hard, unforgiving world in the Badlands and you aren't being paid for nothing! In the rough lands of Teufort, Upward and occasionally, when the big man finally decides to pay you, Suijin, you must bring your trusty bird-panion (Archimedes) and a fine leather hat (Das Übersternmann). Yes you, the handsomely devilish rogue, are gonna solve some murders, fix those murders with a respawn kit, and fix those murders again with more murders! However, you can't show up to a crime scene without looking the part! They aren't going to let a "physician" on the scene of a random crit incident! Bring your tie and way too big collars (Medical Mystery) so the evil-doers can see the sharp corners of your coat a whole five minutes before you dash onto the scene!

Other Styles


The Blazing


Brigadier

The Toolbox with Mister Sir of Vibe

Every good Engineer has a toolbox or two at their disposal. Even a decent Engineer has a toolbox. And fine-tuning your toolbox can be a miracle for your teams. If you're a new Engineer, you've come to the right place. The truth is, no Engineer is perfect. And many of us, including myself, are far from the dot. But there is a certain technique which can make you a better Engineer and a better player in general.

The absolute most important thing to know while playing as the Engineer is the map you're playing on, and to know it well. If you know your maps well, you can set yourself up in strong, creative positions which require a lot of coordination by the enemy team to take down. Remember to think of the three factors which determine a good spot: whether it covers the objective or not, whether it can be hit outside of its range, and whether or not it is spammable from corners. A great sentry spot, such as that at the top of the stairs on Frontier 2nd defends both the flank route on the left and the objective route on the right, and does not have any deficiencies with range. Learn to exploit these map designs and place your sentries where they can do the most damage.

Rollouts as Engineer are very important on Payload and Attack/Defend maps. The first thing you should do when you exit spawn as a RED team member is place a teleporter entrance. As you make your way to the front lines, make sure to pick up any ammo boxes on the way there. Start by placing your sentry and teleporter exit. Make sure you are aware of the locations of ammo pickups to help you speed up the rollout.

The Engineer has a variety of different playstyles, and loadouts to suit them. Don't be afraid to try something new. You'll learn from the experience. You can run, contrary to the "meta," level 3 sentries on offense or mini-sentries on defense. You can run the Eureka Effect. Try out new combinations. Some go well together, and some do not.

Remember that the Engineer is at heart a support class, and your dispenser and teleporter are fundamentally for your team. If you work with your team, placing them where your team is best able to use them, you are sure to guarantee a win for your team. •

Mister Sir of Vibe

We hope you enjoyed reading our magazine (nearly 5 months in the making!)

If you would like to read more, show your support for us on the *Team Fortress 2* subreddit!

If you have skills with writing or designing and would like to help us make this magazine possible, contact our Manager at Reddit username: /u/wittywidi

Thanks, and have fun!

- The Mann Co. Monthly Team